



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Public Health

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April 29, 2009

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H.
Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **SWINE INFLUENZA – UPDATE #5**

In follow-up to my report of April 27, 2009, this is to provide you with an update on swine Influenza.

Disease Summary

Our disease summary updates will focus on providing numbers of confirmed case counts. Because Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) case definitions are evolving as more is learned about the H1N1 swine flu virus, and surveillance activities are revealing possible cases that are being eliminated with additional testing, we are limiting our reports to confirmed cases. **Currently there are no confirmed cases of swine flu in Los Angeles County.**

As of today, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is reporting 91 confirmed cases of swine influenza in the U.S. in 10 states and one death in Texas (see Attachment One). California currently has 14 confirmed swine flu cases. The recent reports of swine flu in the U.S. continue to indicate that the disease is relatively mild to moderate in severity, with only one death due to swine flu. In fact our regular, seasonal flu kills over 36,000 people every year in this country.

Although the U.S. cases continue to be of mild to moderate severity, the situation is different in Mexico, where preliminary information indicates that cases in Mexico are experiencing more severe illness. Mexico is now confirming World Health Organization

(WHO) reports of 26 confirmed cases of swine flu and 7 confirmed deaths due to swine flu so far. The WHO is also reporting that the following countries have reported laboratory confirmed cases with no deaths – Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Israel, and Spain. No deaths have been reported in these countries.

Although no cases have been confirmed in Los Angeles County it is anticipated that cases will be identified in coming days as a result of increased surveillance.

Department of Public Health's Response

As discussed during my briefing at yesterday's Board of Supervisors meeting, the Department of Public Health (DPH) is engaged in the following activities: enhancing our surveillance activities; reminding the public, health care providers and other key sectors to practice respiratory hygiene; preparing for the investigation of cases identified in the County; and preparing to receive federal resources. Specific activities include:

- **DOC Activation:** The Department has activated our Department Operations Center (DOC) and has adopted an Incident Command Structure to properly manage the DPH's surveillance, communications, and response activities.
- **Enhanced Surveillance:** Over the past several days DPH has been working with the Long Beach Health Department, the Pasadena Health Department, emergency rooms, physicians, hospitals, and schools to carefully monitor for any signs of swine flu in the County. In addition, DPH staff have been taking steps to ensure that DPH's Syndromic Surveillance Systems are being properly monitored and that the DPH Public Health Laboratory can manage the increased workload.
- **Preparing for Cases:** DPH is organizing and preparing case investigation teams.
- **Antivirals:** DPH is taking actions to receive and manage the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) materials, including antivirals. The first shipment from the stockpile will arrive April 30, 2009. DPH is also reviewing protocols for distribution and use of antivirals, if and when it is deemed necessary to use them to mitigate the effects of flu. By April 30th, the County will have a total of 675,000 courses of antiviral medications including the new distribution from the SNS. If necessary, Los Angeles County will have 2.5 million courses available within a few days notice. DPH is ***not*** recommending the distribution of antivirals at this time, rather that antivirals only be used in treatment settings and not as a general preventive, or prophylactic, measure. Drug resistance is a concern in the usage of antivirals on a preventive basis.
- **Media:** DPH has also been working hard to minimize the amount of misinformation that has been circulating regarding swine flu. DPH has hosted two press conferences in the past week, including a well-attended press conference Monday, which was co-hosted with representatives from Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Los Angeles

County Office of Education (LACOE), Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), and the Los Angeles World Airports. Yesterday we issued a press release which discusses our response efforts and highlights the finding of probable and possible cases of swine flu. In addition, general information and frequently asked questions about swine flu are posted on the DPH website. Flu prevention tips and links to the CDC's and the WHO's swine flu investigation webpages can also be found on DPH's website. DPH has also been posting informational videos on its YouTube channel.

- Health Education: DPH has been working with media outlets and community partners to educate the public about what they can do to avoid all types of flu, including swine flu. Updated information is posted on the DPH website: <http://ph.lacounty.gov>
- Specialized Outreach: DPH has been in close contact with governmental and community partners during the past several days. Our staff have been reaching out to health care workers and first responders to provide them with guidance on how to care for potential and confirmed swine flu cases.

WHO, Federal and State Response

The following sections summarize response activities being implemented by international, federal and state agencies.

- World Health Organization (WHO): Today the WHO's Director-General raised the level of influenza pandemic alert from Phase 4 (sustained human-to-human transmission) to Phase 5 (human-to-human spread of the virus into at least two countries). The WHO has also stated that given the widespread presence of the virus, the Director-General considers containment of the outbreak infeasible. The WHO is instructing countries to focus on mitigation measures.
- Federal Response: The federal government is also saying that efforts should focus on mitigation rather than containment. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) declared a "public health emergency" on April 26th. This declaration allowed the federal government to begin allocating resources to states and counties for prevention and mitigation measures. These resources include one-quarter of the strategic national stockpile's 50 million treatment courses of antiviral drugs. Los Angeles County is expected to receive its first allocation of antivirals by April 30th.
- Federal Response – CDC: The CDC has been very active in investigating the various outbreaks around the country and offering assistance to local health jurisdictions. The CDC is hosting daily conference calls with state health officers to share up-to-date information about their ongoing disease investigations. Representatives from DPH participate in these calls.

- State: Today, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger proclaimed a state of emergency for the State over the spread of swine flu, expediting the State agencies' responses to the outbreak.
- State - California Department of Public Health (CDPH): Over the past several days, CDPH has coordinated outbreak investigations with the CDC and local health officials in Imperial and San Diego counties. CDPH has also ordered increased surveillance statewide for patients with flu-like illness and expanded public health laboratory testing of potential flu specimens. The state has activated the Joint Emergency Operations Center of CDPH, in coordination with the California Emergency Management Agency. CDPH is hosting daily conference calls with local health officers throughout California. Representatives from DPH participate in these calls.

Thank you for your continued support as evidenced by the Board's declaration today of a local emergency. We will keep you apprised as warranted.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know.

JEF:al

c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

Table 1. U.S. Human Cases of Swine Flu Infection
(As of April 29, 2009, 11:00 AM ET)

States	# of laboratory confirmed cases	Deaths
Arizona	1	
California	14	
Indiana	1	
Kansas	2	
Massachusetts	2	
Michigan	2	
Nevada	1	
New York City	51	
Ohio	1	
Texas	16	1
TOTAL COUNTS	91 cases	1 death
<i>Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</i>		

Table 2. International Human Cases of Swine Flu Infection

States	# of laboratory confirmed cases	Deaths
Mexico	26	7
United States	64	1
Austria	1	
Canada	13	
Germany	3	
Israel	2	
New Zealand	3	
Spain	4	
United Kingdom	5	
TOTAL COUNTS	148 cases	8 deaths
<i>Source: World Health Organization April 28th Update</i>		